# THE OPINION OF THE PARLIAMENT,

About RELIGION, Twenty Years ago

BEING THE

# VOTES, &c.

Of the Honourable Houſe of Commons: *Febr.* 25. &c. 1662. Upon Reading His Majeſties Gracious DECLARATION and SPEECH, *&c.*

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Die Mercurii 25. Feb. 15: *Car. R.*

Reſolved, &c. *nomine contradicente,*

THAT the humble thanks of this Houſe be returned to His Majeſty, for His Reſolution to maintain the Act of Uniformity.

Reſolved, &c.

That it be preſented to the Kings Majeſty as the humble Advice of this Houſe, That no Indulgence be granted to the Diſſenters from the Act of Uniformity.

Most Gracious Soveraign,

*THe Knights, Citizens, and Burgesses, of the Commons House of Parliament, did with great Joy receive Your Majesties most Gracious Speech, at the opening this Session of Parliament, and being thereby invited to consider of your Declaration of the Twenty sixth of* December *last; they have with all Sobriety, Duty, and Affection, examined the grounds thereof; and do by me present unto Your Majesty, Their most hearty Thanks for the same, and humble Advice thereupon; both which, I do beseech your Majesty, that You will vouchsafe me to deliver in their own words.*

*May it please Your most excellent Majesty,*

WE Your Majesties most Dutiful and Loyal Subjects, the Knights, Citizens and Burgesses of the House of Commons in Parliament Assembled, having with all Fidelity and Obedience, considered of the several matters compriſed in Your Majesties late Gracious Declaration of the 26*th.* of *December* last, and Your most Gracious Speech at the beginning of this present Session,

Do, in the first place for our selves, and in the names of all the Commons of *England*, render to Your Sacred Majesty, the Tribute of our most hearty Thanks, for that infinite Grace and Goodness, wherewith Your Majesty hath been pleased to publish Your Royal Intentions of adhereing to Your Act of Indemnity, and Oblivion, by a Constant and Religious Observance of it. And our hearts are further enlarged in these returns of Thanksgivings, when we consider Your Majesties most Princely and Heroick Professions of relying upon the Affections of Your people, and abhorring all sort of Military and Arbitrary Rule. But above all, We can never enough remember, to the Honour of Your Majesties Piety, and our unspeakable Comfort, those solemn and most endearing Invitations of us Your Majesties Subjects to prepare Laws to be presented to Your Majesty, against the growth and increase of Popery; and withal, to provide more Laws against Licentiousness and Impiety; at the same time Declaring Your own Resolutions for maintaining the Act of Uniformity. And it becomes us always to acknowledg and admire Your Majesties Wisdom in this Your Declaration, whereby Your Majesty is pleased to resolve, not only by Sumptuary Laws, but by Your own Royal Example of Frugality, to restrain that excess in mens Expences, which is grown so general and so exorbitant; and to direct our Endeavours to find out fit and proper Laws for Advancement of Trade and Commerce.

After this we most humbly beseech Your Majesty to believe, That it is with extream unwillingness and reluctancy of heart, that we are brought to differ from any thing which Your Majesty hath thought fit to propose; And though we do no way doubt, but that the unreasonable Distempers of Mens spirits, and the many Mutinies and Conspiracies, which were carried on during the late Intervals of Parliament, did reasonably incline Your Majesty to endeavour by Your Declaration to give some small allay to those ill humours, till the Parliament Assembled, and the Hopes of Indulgence, if the Parliament should consent to it, especially seeing the pretenders to this Indulgence, did seem to make some

Titles

Titles to it, by Virtue of Your Majeſties Declaration from *Breda*. Nevertheleſs, we your Majeſties moſt Dutiful and Loyal Subjects, who are now returned to ſerve in Parliament, from thoſe ſeveral parts and places of Your Kingdom, for which we are choſen, Do humbly offer to Your Majeſties great Wiſdom, That it is in no ſort adviſable that there be any Indulgence to ſuch perſons who preſume to diſſent from the Act of Uniformity, and the Religion Eſtabliſhed,

*For theſe Reaſons,*

WE have conſidered the nature of Your Majeſties Declaration from *Breda*, and are humbly of opinion, That Your Majeſty ought not to be preſſed with it any further,

Becauſe it is not a Promiſe in it ſelf, but only a Gracious Declaration of Your Majeſties Intentions, to do what in You lay, and what a Parliament ſhould adviſe Your Majeſty to do, and no ſuch Advice was ever given, or thought fit to be offered; nor could it be otherwiſe underſtood, becauſe there were Laws of Uniformity then in being, which could not be diſpenced with, but by Act of Parliament.

They who do pretend a right to that ſuppoſed promiſe, put the Right into the hands of their Repreſentatives, whom they choſe to ſerve for them in this Parliament, who have paſſed, and Your Majeſty conſented to the Act of Uniformity. If any ſhall preſume to ſay, that a Right to the benefit of this Declaration doth ſtill remain after this Act paſſed,

It tends to diſſolve the very Bonds of Government, and to ſuppoſe a diſability in Your Majeſty and the Houſes of Parliament, to make a Law contrary to any part of Your Majeſties Declaration, though both Houſes ſhould adviſe Your Majeſty to it.

We have alſo conſidered the nature of the Indulgence propoſed, with reference to thoſe Conſequences, which muſt neceſſarily attend it.

It will eſtabliſh Schiſm by a Law, and make the whole Government of the Church precarious, and the Cenſures of it of no Moment or Conſideration at all.

It will no way become the Gravity or Wiſdome of a Parliament, to paſs a Law at one Seſſion for Uniformity, and at the next Seſſion (the reaſons of Uniformity continuing ſtill the ſame) to paſs another Law to fruſtrate or weaken the execution of it.

It will expoſe Your Majeſty to the reſtleſs Importunity of every Sect or Opinion, and of every ſingle perſon alſo, who ſhall preſume to diſſent from the Church of *England*.

It will be a cauſe of increaſing Sects and Sectaries, whoſe numbers will weaken the true Proteſtant Profeſſion ſo far, that it will at leaſt be difficult for it, to defend it ſelf againſt them: And, which is yet further conſiderable, theſe Numbers, which by being troubleſom to the Government, find they can arrive to an Indulgence, will, as their Numbers increaſe, be yet more troubleſome, that ſo at length they may arrive to a general Toleration, which Your Majeſty hath declared againſt, and in time, ſome prevalent Sect, will at laſt contend for an Eſtabliſhment, which, for ought can be foreſeen, may end in Popery.

It is a thing altogether without Preſident, and will take away all means of convicting Recuſants, and be inconſiſtant with the method and proceedings of the Laws of *England*.

Laſtly,

Laſtly, It is humbly conceived, that the Indulgence propoſed, will be ſo far from tending to the Peace of the Kingdom, that it is rather likely to occaſion great diſturbance. And on the contrary, That the aſſerting of the Laws, and the Religion eſtabliſht, according to the Act of Uniformity, is the moſt probable means to produce a ſetled Peace and Obedience throughout Your Kingdom: Becauſe the variety of Profeſſions in Religion, when openly indulged, doth directly diſtinguiſh men into parties, and withal, gives them opportunity to count their Numbers; which, conſidering the animoſities, that out of a Religious pride will be kept on foot by the ſeveral Factions, doth tend directly and inevitably to open diſturbance. Nor can Your Majeſty have any Security, that the Doctrine or Worſhip of the ſeveral Factions, which are all Governed by a ſeveral Rule, ſhall be conſiſtent with the Peace of Your Kingdom.

And if any perſons ſhall preſume to diſturb the Peace of the Kingdom, We do in all humility declare, That we will for ever, and in all Occaſions, be ready with our utmoſt endeavour and aſſiſtance, to adhere to, and ſerve Your Majeſty according to our bounden Duty and Allegiance.

*FINIS.*

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